(c) Ministry of Women and Child Development have been requested to provide necessary support in the rehabilitation of child labour covered under the National Child Labour Project Scheme of Ministry of Labour and Employment.

Violation of Labour Law by Industrial Units

1742. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the incident of fire on November 22, 2006 in a tannery factory at Topsia in Kolkata in which ten workers were burnt alive;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the factory was being run illegally and in violation of even the basic labour laws and rules;

(d) whether Government are aware of the substantial violation of laws relating to labourers by the owners of industrial units in various States, including West Bengal, as reflected by the above incident; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by Government to ensure adherence to labour laws in States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The State Government of West Bengal has informed that the fire occurred in a leather goods making unit named Tenex Exports situated at 33-C, Topsia Road, Kolkata-700039, P.S. Tiljola. It was not a tannery. Preliminary enquiry was made on 22.11.06 in the afternoon. Inquiry revealed that the said units was occupying the entire third/top floor measuring about 3000 sft. of a building in densely populated residential area. The building had only one staircase. Third floor occupied by the said unit was provided with two doorways (Collapsible gate) leading to common landing of the staircase. First and second floor of the building had been occupied by the other concerns. Reportedly at the time of fire both collapsible gates were under lock and key from the outside and one SK. Khalil in passession of the keys was sleeping inside. With the spread of the fire he woke up and while trying to open the lock one of the collapsible gates, unfortunately the key bunch fell outside the gate in such a position from where he could not pick them up. Ultimately neighbours could notice the fire and rushed to the third floor of the building and unlocked the collapsible

gates. Bu this time major fire took lives of 9 labourers and injured 18 others.

Considerable quantity of flammable substances mainly rubber solution, rubber mixing compound ahesives in possession of the said unit caught fire resulting the loss of lives and serious injury due to fire burn. Subsequently, it was learnt from local police station that two more workers succumbed to their burn injury raising death toll to 11 (eleven).

(c) The State Government has replied in affirmative.

(d) and (e) For the industrial units which fall in the state sphere, the State Governments are the appropriate authorities vested with legal powers to intervene and settle the issues relating to labour laws.

As and when violation of labour laws come to the notice of this Ministry, the same are forwarded to the State Government concerned for taking necessary action in the matter. The State Government of West Bengal has informed that a joint inspection team comprising inspector of factories, ESIC representatives, local P.F. authorities have already been formed and such joint inspection team is visiting different factories to ensure effective implementation of labour laws.

Establishments punished for violating guidelines of EPFO

1743. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of establishments convicted for not adhering to the guidelines of EPFO since 2000; and

(b) the action taken by Government against those establishments, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) The details of cases, resulting in conviction are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) Besides launching of prosecution under section 14 of the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and filing of complaints under section 406/409 of the Indian Penal Code, other actions as provided under the Act are taken against defaulting establishments for recovery of dues. This includes, attachment/sale of movable/immovable properties, arrest of defaulters, etc.